

Health Watch:

Can't smell the roses?



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Does tiptoeing through the tulips literally make you sick? You're not alone. Millions of people suffer from seasonal allergies and it's that time of year again!

The terms 'hay fever' and 'rose fever' were used by English farmers who blamed hay and flowers as the culprit for symptoms that include watery, itchy eyes, a constant runny nose, sneezing, headache, and sore throat. Allergic rhinitis - the medical term for hay fever - is seasonal due to the cycle of weeds and grasses.

People with pollen allergies often mistake the yellow flower pollen that covers their cars in the morning as the cause. Most often microscopic grains of pollen released by trees, grasses and weeds are the culprits. It's light and dry and spread

by the wind. An allergen is any substance causing an allergic reaction. Seasonal allergens can be inhaled, swallowed or come into contact with the skin.

Symptoms may start as early as March and go as late as November when pollination ends. Spring is the time for tree and grass pollen, while fall is the time for ragweed pollen, dust and molds. Genetics play a role in how moderate or severe your allergic reactions are. But since we didn't choose our parents, the best treatment for allergies is to avoid the source of allergens.

As a seasonal allergy sufferer, you can most likely predict the times you will experience symptoms and take steps to minimize their effects. - Try not to spend too much time outdoors. Air pollution can aggravate your symptoms. Peak pollen hours are from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. Stay

indoors on dry, windy days when pollen will circulate the most. Pollen counts will lower significantly immediately following a rain shower. - Keep windows and doors closed and use your air conditioner. - Keep windows up when driving and the air conditioner on recirculate. - Wash your hands frequently. - Wash hair and body every night to keep pollen from getting into your bed linens. - Bathe pets often. - Don't hang your laundry out to dry - wet clothes are pollen magnets. - Don't rub your eyes. - Regular exercise can help keep the nasal passages open and help alleviate congestion.

If symptoms linger or worsen, make an appointment with your doctor. A more serious infection or sinusitis may be present. And if you have allergy medication, take it as prescribed to offset the effects of pollen.

Kim: Heart and 'Seoul'...

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for a little while. Also, I wanted to get away from home and see the world. In Korea, all males must serve in the military. My dad suggested that I follow that tradition," said Kim.

Kim's primary goal is to work as a firefighter, both in and out of the Navy.

"I want to strike for Damage Controlman. I want to be a firefighter when I leave the Navy. I'll probably stay up here because it's easier to get into the fire-fighting academy. I also want to get my associate's degree before I get out of the Navy," said Kim.

Like most Americans, Kim is part of the huge melting pot that makes up this society. Proud of his Korean heritage, Kim takes equal pride in being an American, but plans on passing his family heritage along.

"I don't see myself as being any different from the other Sailors I work with. I'm American. When I raise a family, I will want to raise my kids the same way my dad raised me, to respect our traditions and culture. I have a lot of responsibility because I have two younger brothers, ages 10 and 14," Kim said.

Still, Kim does value the importance of not just where he came from, but also where his shipmates come from. As May's observance of Asian/American Heritage Month comes to an end, Kim reflects on how proud he is of being a Sailor. An American Sailor.

"The Navy has changed so much. You see people from all over the world on the ship now. I think it's important that people are recognized for who they are," concluded Kim.